PHIL 385 – 13188, Ethics and Computers, Fall 2024

- Instructor: Scott Hill
- Department: Philosophy
- Office Location: 008 Fiske Hall
- Telephone: +1-316-978-3125
- Email: scott.hill@wichita.edu
- Preferred Method of Contact: Email
- Student Office Hours: Monday 2:30pm to 3:30pm
- Classroom Day/Time: Tuesday and Thursday 12:30pm
- Prerequisites: None
- Teaching Assistant: None
- TA Contact: None

How to use this syllabus

This syllabus provides you with information specific to this course, and it also provides information about important university policies. This document should be viewed as a course overview; it is not a contract and is subject to change as the semester evolves. For example, the schedule of topics and readings might change a bit. I will let you know about such changes in class.

Student Office Hours

My student office hours are listed on page one of the course syllabus. Please utilize this time to meet with me for course related discussions: asking for extra help, seeking further clarification of material presented in class, and follow up on aspects of the class they are interested in. These hours are not required for the course, but are available to help support you on your path to success.

Course Description

This course is an introduction to philosophical thought about ethics and some of its application to engineering problems.

Definition of a Credit Hour

Success in this 3 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction and preparation/studying or course related activities for a total of 135 hours.

Measurable Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- Present, explain, and evaluate philosophical arguments.

- Understand some of the ethical theories discussed by philosophers.

- Understand some of the philosophical problems connected to ethics and to engineering.

- Reflect philosophically on the Fundamental Canons of the National Society of Professional Engineers.

Required Texts/Readings Textbook

Required reading assignments will come from freely accessible online articles or electronic readings posted to the Blackboard site. In the Lecture Slides Learning Module, I will post the slides I use in class. In the Readings Learning Module, I will post the readings we use in class.

Other Equipment/Materials/Proctored Exams

Class Protocol and Conduct

This is a university course with commensurate expectations. We expect professional conduct in the classroom. Unprofessional conduct, e.g. off topic activities, may affect your grade or even your academic career. Be respectful at all times. Students demonstrating confrontational, disruptive, or threatening behavior may be asked to leave the classroom immediately and may not be allowed to return to the classroom for the remainder of the class period. Consequences of this behavior may also include (and are not limited to): Suspension from class for a minimum of one additional class period and report or referral to the WSU police department, Student Conduct and the WSU Care Team.

Contact Policy

Although you may attempt to reach me by phone, email communication is always preferred. Feel free to email me any questions or concerns following these guidelines:
- Always use the course name in the subject line of the email
- Remember to sign your name.
- **Always** email me from your WSU email address. Email sent from personal email servers like Gmail, Yahoo, etc., have a tendency to end up in my spam folder, and I never see them. You may also email me through Blackboard via the Email My Instructor tab. I also offer an Ask My Instructor forum on Blackboard which allows common questions to be seen and responded to publicly.
- You should NOT contact me for tech support.
  - Any technical problems involving your computer, or issues regarding file uploading or sharing, should go through the Blackboard Support. You can contact them at 316-978-3909. You can also fill out a request for help form at their website: https://wichita.edu/BbSupport
  - However, if you have a problem with access or uploading assignments, you *should* let me know before your assignment is due. You will also have to accompany this notification with the file in question, so I can verify that it is completed by the due date/time.

Response Time

To Email and Ask My Instructor Questions:
With the exception of holidays and weekends, I will usually respond to emails within 24 hours.

Feedback on Assignments:
Unless there is an emergency, I will provide feedback on work within one week of submission.

Academic Integrity

Students at Wichita State University are expected to uphold high academic standards. WSU will not tolerate a lack of academic integrity. Students are responsible for knowing and following the [Student Academic Integrity Policy 2.17](https://www.wichita.edu/about/policy/ch_02/ch2_17.php) (https://www.wichita.edu/about/policy/ch_02/ch2_17.php).

When the faculty member determines sanctions are warranted for violations of academic integrity, regardless of severity, the faculty member must report the infraction to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. If you need more information about the process or wish to appeal a decision, please visit https://www.wichita.edu/about/student_conduct/ai.php

Unauthorized Use of Generative AI
Please note in particular that *Unauthorized Use or Possession of Materials or Resources* (Policy 2.17, item IV.B.2) includes unauthorized use of generative AI like ChatGPT or GPT4. In this course, all use of generative AI is prohibited except as may be specified in assignment instructions. Any student suspected of unauthorized use of generative AI may be asked to demonstrate their mastery of the assignment learning outcomes in an alternate format, such as a verbal interview or an additional problem set, before a determination is made as to whether an academic integrity violation report is warranted.

Sexual Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation

Wichita State University is committed to creating a safe and healthy environment for all of our community members. This includes the elimination of sexual misconduct, relationship violence, and stalking within the University community. These incidents may interfere with or limit an individual's ability to benefit from or fully participate in the University's educational programs.

Students are asked to immediately report incidents to the University Police Department, (316) 978-3450 or students may contact the Title IX Coordinator at (316) 978-5177 or submit a report to the Office of Civil Rights, Title IX & ADA Compliance at [Office of Civil Rights, Title IX & ADA Compliance (CTAC) Report Form (maxient.com)](#).

Students may also report incidents to an instructor, faculty or staff member, who are required by law to notify the Title IX Coordinator. If a student wishes to keep the information confidential, the student may speak with staff members of the Counseling and Psychological Services (316) 978-3440 or Student Health Services (316) 978-3620.

Sexual assault prevention training is required of all students, faculty and staff. These trainings, in addition to being highly interactive and engaging, are based in research around the best practices for healthy communities. Students will need to complete this training in the fall semester before being able to enroll for the spring. For more information regarding the training, visit the CTAC website at: https://www.wichita.edu/administration/oiec/training.php.

Students with Disabilities

A disability is something that affects a major life activity. These life activities include but are not limited to, learning, walking, breathing, hearing, and seeing, in addition to many other physical, sensory functions, and psychological disabilities.

If you are a student with a disability or believe you might have a disability, which requires accommodations, please contact the Office of Student Accommodations and Testing (OSAT) at https://www.wichita.edu/services/accommodations/index.php to discuss reasonable and appropriate accommodations and eligibility requirements. It is the University's goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability OSAT will review your concerns and determine, with you, what academic accommodations are necessary and appropriate for you. For example, adaptions of teaching methods, class materials or testing may be made on a case-by-case basis if warranted, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All information and documentation of your disability is confidential and will not be released by OSAT without your written permission.

The Office of Student Accommodations and Testing (OSAT) is located in the Shocker Success Center, room 118, (316) 978-3309 (voice/tty) (316-854-3032 videophone). Students seeking an accommodation must complete the online application at: https://hunter.accessiblelearning.com/Wichita/ApplicationStudent.aspx.

Respect for Diversity

Wichita State University is committed to being an inclusive campus that reflects the evolving diversity of society. To further that goal, Wichita State University does not discriminate in its employment practices, educational programs, or activities on the basis of age (40 years or older), ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, political affiliation, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or status as a veteran. Retaliation against an individual filing or cooperating in a complaint process is also prohibited.

Students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives are welcome in this course and the diversity that students bring to this course should be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. All materials and activities are presented with the intent to be respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let me know so that we can make arrangements for you.

Complaints or concerns related to alleged discrimination may be directed to the Office of Civil Rights, Title IX & ADA Compliance (CTAC), Wichita State University, 316-978-3187, ctac@wichita.edu.

Names & Pronouns

As a diverse and inclusive campus community, Wichita State University recognizes that its students may identify themselves by names within the campus community that are different from their legal names. A student's name within the community may be either their legal name or a chosen first/middle name used with their legal last name. A student's chosen name and pronouns should be respected by all in the classroom.

For information about chosen name, students should visit www.wichita.edu/name. To provide preferred pronouns, click on "View and Update Personal Information" link in the Student Tools channel on the myWSU Home tab. Use the "Edit" buttons to update information.

Syllabus Policies and Student Resources

All students should familiarize themselves with the course-related policies and student resources that can be found at: www.wichita.edu/syllabuspolicies

These include:

- Important Academic Dates
- Video and Audio recording
- Shocker Alert System
- Intellectual Property
- CARE Team
- Counseling and Prevention Services
- The Office of the Student Advocate
- Academic Appeals
- Student Health Services
- Heskett Center and Campus Recreation
- First Generation Students
- Tobacco Free Campus

Grading Scale

WSU uses a +/- grading scale for final grades and to calculate grade point averages. In this class, grades are assigned according to the following chart. (Other classes might assign grades differently: Be sure to understand the different grading scales in all your classes:

Points/Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Points	Interpretation
	A	4.00	A range denotes excellent performance
	A-	3.70	
	B+	3.30	
	B	3.00	B range denotes good performance
	B-	2.70	
	C+	2.30	
	C	2.00	C range denotes satisfactory performance
	C-	1.70	
	D+	1.30	
	D	1.00	D range denotes unsatisfactory performance
	D-	0.70	

Points/Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Points	Interpretation
	F	0.00	

Assignments

Your overall grade is based on a point total of 100 points, which come from the following assignments:

- 5 Discussion Cycles: 2 points each

- 3 Exams: 25 points each

- Comprehensive Exam 10 points

- Written Assignment: 5 points

Discussion: Each member of the class will receive three color-coded single-use question cards with his or her name on them. Starting the second week of classes, you will be expected to use all cards once every three weeks. Here is how you use the cards: If you want to ask a question or make a comment and would like to use a card, raise that card when attempting to get called on. Once called on, Scott will collect your card. In order to get full credit in the participation category in a given three week period, each member of the class needs to use all their cards. At the beginning of each three-week period, I'll redistribute your cards. To use a card, the questions and comments need to be relevant and thoughtful. Also, to get credit for discussion over a three-week period, one must avoid use of electronic devices in class during that period. So remember to put away phones, computers, etc.

ALL cards must be used during a given cycle to get **ANY** credit for that cycle. It is all or nothing. So turning in only one or two cards will still result in zero points for the cycle.

Note: If you have serious social anxiety and absolutely can't talk in class, please come talk to me about it. We will figure out an alternative way for you to get discussion credit.

Exams: Exams will be taken in class.

Missed Assignments and Exams

Regardless of the reason, missed exams can be made up within 1 week of the date of the exam with a 20% late penalty. Discussion cycles and the ABET Written Assignment must be completed on time

Two options are available for makeups. One option is to take the makeup during walk-in office hours, and you must email me a request for the makeup at least one day in advance. Any makeup taken during office hours must be completed in the same amount of time allotted in class for the exam, or when office hours conclude, whichever comes first. No credit will be given for exams later than 1 week of the original assignment date.

Extra Credit

The is no extra credit available for this course.

Very Tentative Schedule

Week #	Dates	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
1	8/20, 8/23	Trolley Problem		
2	8/27, 8/29	Metaethics		
3	9/3, 9/5	Metaethics		
4	9/10, 9/12	Review and Exam		**Exam 1**

5	9/17, 9/19	Normative Ethics	Mill 'Utilitarianism'	
6	9/24 9/26	Normative Ethics	Aquinas 'The Doctrine of Double Effect'	
7	10/1, 10/3	AI Doomsday	Bostrom 'Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies' (selected passages) Chalmers 'The Singularity: A Philosophical Analysis"	
8	10/8, 10/10	AI Doomsday	Gallow 'Instrumental Divergence' Thorstad 'Against the Singularity Hypothesis'	
9	10/17	Review and Exam		**Exam 2**
10	10/22, 10/24	Animal's and Computers	Singer 'All Animals Are Equal" Norcross 'Puppies, Pigs, and People' Lamey 'The Animal Ethics of Temple Grandin'	
11	10/29, 10/31	Animals and Computers	Visak 'Engineering Life Expectancy and Non-Identity Cases' Podorski 'The Diner's Defense: Producers, Consumers, and the Benefits of Existence'	
12	11/5, 11/7	TBD	TBD	
13	11/11,	TBD	TBD	

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	11/13			
14	11/18, 11/20	Review and Exam		**Exam 3**
15	11/25	Engineering and Cosmic Significance	Nagel 'The Absurd' Kahane 'Cosmic Insignificance'	
16	12/2, 12/4	Review and Comprehensive Final Exam		**Comprehensive Final Exam**
17	12/7	Finals Week		**Written Assignment Due 12/7**

Concealed Carry Policy

The Kansas Legislature has legalized concealed carry on public university campuses. Guns must be out of view, concealed either on the body of the carrier, or backpack, purse or bag that remains under the immediate control of the carrier.

Gun owners must familiarize themselves with WSU policy [11.19 / Weapons on University Property](#) and the [Kansas Board of Regent's weapons policy](#). If you believe that there has been a violation of these policies, please contact the University Police Department at (316) 978-3450.